

VZCZCXYZ0000
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHEG #0484 0711055
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 111055Z MAR 08
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8490
INFO RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 000484

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ELA (IRWIN)
DOD FOR OSD
USCENTCOM FOR AMMONS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/31/2018
TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [EG](#)
SUBJECT: EGYPT WELCOMES AFRICOM

Classified By: ECPO Minister-Counselor William R. Stewart
for reasons 1.4 (a), (b) and (d).

11. (C) AFRICOM Commander General William Ward met Egyptian Chief of Staff LTG Sami Enan and Assistant Minister of Defense MG Mohamed El-Assar on at the Ministry of Defense on February 17. During the hour-long meeting, which included DASD Whelan, OMC Chief, and ECPO minister counselor, GEN Ward explained that AFRICOM was still in the process of standing up, and his visit was designed to consult early with close friends for advice on the best way forward for the new command.

12. (C) GEN Ward said that Egypt played a unique role, bridging Africa and the Middle East. It was not DoD's intent to in any way disrupt Egypt's key relationship with USCENTCOM. AFRICOM's intent was to work with Egypt strictly on matters pertaining to Africa. GEN Ward explained that his vision is to work together with African nations like Egypt to promote peace and stability on the continent. AFRICOM will take a long term approach. Achieving its goals will not happen overnight. But working together with African nations, AFRICOM can help achieve stability.

13. (C) Anan said Egypt supported such an approach. It was very important for the U.S. not to act as a "policeman." GEN Ward agreed; "We will only work with countries that ask for our help." Anan said that Egypt will use its excellent relations with African nations and the United States to support AFRICOM, "as long as the United States pursues stability." GEN Ward stressed that AFRICOM would operate on the basis of dialogue and consultation, and would act to support indigenous efforts, not take them over.

14. (C) In a subsequent meeting, MG El-Assar noted that it would be a mistake to see Egypt merely as a Middle Eastern nation -- belonging only to USCENTCOM -- and it was important to see Egypt as African, as well. GEN Ward agreed, re-emphasizing at the same time the importance of maintaining Egypt's crucial relationship with USCENTCOM. Nonetheless, in its dealings with other African nations, GEN Ward expressed AFRICOM's hope that Egypt will play a leadership role, as it does in the Middle East. DASD Whelan added that emphasizing Egypt's African identity could also help expand the audience of interested parties on Capitol Hill, which could help as Egypt seeks to improve its image there. MG El-Assar agreed, adding that recent congressional action to condition assistance to Egypt was "hurtful."

15. (U) This message was not cleared by AFRICOM.
RICCIARDONE